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22 June 1965

SUBJECT: Estimate of Attitudes of News Media and General
Population in Certain Countries, to U.S. Policies as
Exemplified by our Actions in Vietnam and Santo Domingo

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1. This is a narrative tabulation of the general thrust of the
responses received [REDACTED] to the question posed:

a. In Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Thailand and the
Philippines, our policies, particularly on Vietnam, receive
general understanding and support. Our policies on Santo Domingo
are clearly of less interest and concern. The minority opposition
to our policies, where it exists in these countries, takes full
advantage of our domestic opposition as it finds expression in our
own news media. (This factor is prevalent generally, in varying
degrees, in the countries we queried.)

b. In England, Norway, Denmark and Sweden, reactions to
our policies are mixed and confused.

(1) In England, divided opinion among the population and
the major newspapers, which favored U.S. policies slightly a
few months ago, has shifted to a more pronounced attitude of
questioning and disfavor as a result of the bombings of North
Vietnam and the possibility of U.K. involvement in a dis-
agreeable conflict of doubtful outcome. Here again, interest
is high on the Vietnamese situation and on a low order of
magnitude and declining on the Dominican question.

(2) In Norway, which is generally sympathetic to the U.S.
objectives, there is opposition to our policies both in the press
and among the people, caused mostly by concern over the
broader possible consequences of escalation, with particular
reference to the fact that Norway has a common border with
the Soviet Union and would not like to suffer the fate of Finland.

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(3) In Denmark, while our policies in Vietnam on the whole receive general support, and are understood, our position in Santo Domingo is not adequately understood and is therefore criticized.

(4) In Sweden, although there is much ambivalence of attitude and vocal criticism, the estimate is that strong moves in Vietnam or Latin America would ultimately be viewed rationally by the Swedes and receive their political support.

c. In Japan and Finland, the press and the public generally are unsympathetic if not strongly critical of our policies, and in France a measure of public support of our firm stand in Vietnam is being eroded by De Gaulle's anti-U. S. position and press criticisms of our policies in both Vietnam and the Dominican Republic.

d. In Iceland, very little interest is shown in either Vietnam or Dominican issues. The local government papers are generally sympathetic to the U. S. policy and difficulties, and the Communist press highly critical.

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2. On a world-wide basis, we can draw the following generalizations

a. In many sectors of the populations there is a basic apathy toward both Vietnam and the Dominican Republic, except as various forms of local self-interest are affected, in terms of local elections, present commitments in the areas concerned, or national survival. The situation in Vietnam is far better understood and the issues more clear, although there is doubt about the future. There is some frustration over the fact that modern technology has not prevailed in a jungle war. The most prevalent fear is that the bombings of North Vietnam could lead to further escalation and perhaps a general war.

b. On the other hand, the Dominican questions are in many instances too remote to stimulate any real concern, or are considered to be localized. The rationale behind the U. S. action is often misunderstood, and our "intervention" regretted or vilified.

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c. Where there is strong opposition to U. S. policies, it is often lead by the left-wing media and organized leftist or Communist front groups. (France is an exception, where their role is secondary.) A disproportionate advantage is taken of U. S. news media and news services coverage of domestic U. S. dissent to the Administration's policies.

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3. The tenor [REDACTED] suggests that in all our policy statements, news releases, and guidances to receptive journalists and editors, the U. S. must project the image of a nation mindful of and willing to exercise its responsibilities as a Free World leader. The U. S. must show that we are ready to take positive initiatives -- unilaterally or in concert with other nations as time and circumstances permit -- to expose the true character of Communism, to oppose Communist subversion and aggrandizement in any form, and to employ force judiciously when the Communist side proves unreceptive to negotiation and consultation and persists in its subversive efforts. The U. S. needs frequently to reiterate its objectives and to express them in terms understandable and acceptable to the man in the street here and abroad. The U. S. must avoid giving the impression that it is we who are afraid of the Communist bogeyman; we must make clear the implications of Communism and our objectives, to each country or region. Above all, it is imperative that the other nations of the Free World understand our policies, and retain full confidence in our interests and capabilities.

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